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## Chapter 7

# Immigration in Europe, Security, Terrorism

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### Introduction

My contribution to the debate on the topics raised by the Workshop (the social stress of immigrants as a possible cause of terrorism) is based on selected literature in the field of *sociology of migration*. In the first part of the paper, I consider the issue of *integration* of Muslim immigrants in Europe, showing how controversial the same concept of integration is. I then analyze how *the integration of Muslim minorities has become a highly politicized matter all over Europe*, raising questions about the forms of recognition that should be granted by the European states to immigrant minorities in order to allow them to keep their religious and cultural specificities in the frame of European laws and values. Muslim minorities have been extremely visible, because of their political mobilizations on various topics (marches by French citizens of North African origin, called “beur”; demonstrations against the Salman Rushdie’s book “Satanic Verses” in the UK; debates and manifestations demonstrations on the veil issue in France and Italy; strong participation in the anti-war movement in the UK...). The predominant reactions of the European public opinion to Muslims’ requests have gone from suspicion to the clear hostility, legitimized by political groups –generally at the right or the extreme right, as the *Front National* in France, the British National Party (BNP), the Northern League in Italy, who consider Muslims *in general* as a threat to European culture and organize demonstrations or counter-demonstrations to oppose the opening of mosques, the recognition of Muslim feasts in schools<sup>1</sup>, the authorization of veil in public offices etc.

The negative attitude of European public opinion towards Muslims *in general* is not a consequence of the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, even if it has become stronger afterwards. In 1997 a report titled *Islamophobia: a Challenge For Us All* by the Runnymede Trust, an organization founded in 1968 to challenge racism and promote multi-ethnicity in the

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<sup>1</sup> The latest is the Italian former Minister of the Berlusconi Government, Roberto Calderoli, who has organized a “pig day” to protest against the opening of a new Mosque in Bologna (Repubblica, 14th of September 2007). The same man became famous because he went to television with a tee-shirt showing the Danish drawings, during the Danish cartoons crisis. The result of his action were big anti-Italian demonstrations in Libya (where Italian television is largely watched) and 11 deaths during the attack on the Italian consulate in Bengazi...

UK<sup>2</sup>, defines for the first time the concept of *Islamophobia*, drafting its eight main characters.

In the second part of the paper, I question the connexion between Islamophobia and the development of an Islamic fundamentalist political movement at world level. In fact most researches tend to show that the radical fundamentalist ideology is followed only by a tiny minority of Muslim immigrants in Europe, – first and/or second generation, according to the countries - represented by a limited number of organizations. The majority of Muslim immigrants are strongly against terrorism and condemn 9/11 [1, 2, 3, 4]. Reasons for Islamophobia must also be sought inside European societies, where in spite of official discourses on tolerance immigrants and strangers (not only Muslim ones) are “constructed” as “deviants”, “criminals”, “enemies”, a threat to “security”. In order to clarify the phenomenon, I analyze briefly Bauman’s work on *immigration* and *security* [5]; I consider the theory of “moral panic” as a combination of reality and social construction.

Without denying the reality of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism as *a world phenomenon*, the social construction of Muslims in Europe as “terrorists”<sup>3</sup> is extremely dangerous not only in respect to social cohesion: the growing Islamophobia<sup>4</sup> in Europe makes the fight against the terrorist challenge more difficult. In fact, the Islamophobic approach does not make any distinction between a minority of fundamentalists (among whom, we count as well “autochthonous” Europeans, converted to Islam), who reject the “West” and the “system” in total, and the majority of the immigrant Muslim population, who are against terrorism<sup>5</sup> and could react against it, but who also demand the recognition of their specificity and respect for their opinions. This confusion provokes resentment among the general Muslim population hostile to terrorism and largely contributes to produce the “social stress” that is evoked as topic of the Workshop.

Finally, in the last two paragraphs, I present briefly two pieces of research on Muslims in Europe in which I have taken part in. The first one was done in the UK about the participation of young Muslims to the alter global movement and especially the *Stop the war* coalition. The second study, done in Italy, looked at the participation of young Muslims to associative life in general. The researchers show how young Muslims participation in social movements is an answer to immigrant communities’ isolation and is an expression of a double Muslim/European identity. Radical political points of view on world conflicts (rejection of the Bush administration policy and of the “USA imperialism”) do not coincide at all with ideology of *jihadism* or support for

<sup>2</sup> ([www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/pdfs/islamophobia.pdf](http://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/pdfs/islamophobia.pdf)).

<sup>3</sup> Basques should then as well be accused of terrorism because of ETA!

<sup>4</sup> On the 18th December 2006, in Vienna, the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia has presented the Report “Muslims in the European Union: discrimination and Islamophobia.” It contains the existing data on discrimination of which Muslims are victims in the labour market, education and housing. Islamophobic acts go from simple verbal threats to attacks on persons and properties. The Report presents a long list of actions, from physical aggression up to arson. “Such behaviours are illegal. It is consequently necessary to produce a political guide to deal with the problem. Assuring equal treatment to all Europeans, independently from their origin.” the director of the EUMC has declared, see <http://eumc.europa.eu>

<sup>5</sup> Surveys done among the Muslim population in the UK in November 2001 showed that 81% considered the attack on the Twin Towers to be unjustified. (ICM Press Release 14 November 2001 - <http://www.icmresearch.co.uk/reviews/2001/today-muslims-poll-nov-2001.htm>)

terrorism<sup>6</sup>. Both researches show the complexity of the issue concerning these young people's identity, which is simultaneously European and Muslim.

### Muslim immigrants' integration in Europe

There is no doubt that after the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, the participation of immigrants or people of immigrant origin in terrorist attacks in Spain or in the UK, and the discovery of cells of Islamic fundamentalists ready to enter action in various European countries have raised a lot of emotion all over Europe. Scholars of different disciplines - sociology, psychology, and political sciences - have tried to understand the causes of these actions and the motivations of terrorists, looking also at their personal histories. These facts have further encouraged the development of a *common sense* that accused Muslims of being unable to integrate into Western, liberal, modern societies because of their culture<sup>7</sup>, adding the equation between Muslims and terrorists which has been legitimized by the media and by the discourses of some political activists, generally at the extreme right of the political landscape. Media and simplistic political discourses establish as a "*self-evident fact*" automatic links between causes (for example the Islamic culture) and effects (the participation in terrorist movements). This type of discourse ignores the possibility that social realities are the product of complex interactions and processes of definition and significations<sup>8</sup>.

Any such generalisation can only be a stereotype. The migratory trajectories of Muslims vary according to the different European countries: Muslim presence dates back to more than fifty or sixty years in the UK and France, where various generations are present, while it is relatively recent in Italy, Spain and Greece, which have become immigration countries only during the eighties of the past century.

The most important arrivals of Muslims into Europe are part of the so-called *post-colonial migration*. After World War 2, migratory flows of Muslims, directed towards Centre-Northern Europe have been strongly influenced by colonial links. For France, the areas of reference were the Maghrebian countries, particularly Algeria, for the United Kingdom, the Indian Sub-continent, for Holland, Indonesia and Suriname. Germany, which did not have a strong colonial past, became the destination for Turkish immigrants, thanks also to previous links between the Prussian and the Ottoman Empires. These are mainly flows of low-qualified workers and of a small percentage of intellectuals and students. It is important to notice, that, during the fifties and the sixties, that is the first phase of post-war migration to Europe, immigrants were mainly

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the attack of the Twin Towers can be perceived as terrorism and strongly condemned, but not the insurgency in Iraq or the actions of the Hezbollah in Lebanon or of Hamas in Palestine.

<sup>7</sup> The borders of modernity and of West are very fluid: there are niches that reject modernity inside the so-called western world and there are niches of post-modernity in the non-western world...Just to give an example: the opposition to the teaching of the evolution in some USA states because of the Christian fundamentalists is certainly not an example of modernity...in the national museum of Lhasa, Tibet-China, on the contrary, the Darwinian theory is clearly shown and children of the Tibetan schools go to visit it and learn the theory of evolution...Is not the acceptance of the scientific knowledge a clear sign of modernity? Then the Tibet is certainly more modern than a few United States where evolution cannot be taught in schools...

<sup>8</sup> This approach ignores also that in many countries of the Muslim Arabic world, the local identity cannot be reduced to an Arab Islamic culture, as some power discourses or fundamentalist discourses tend to do. Take for example the Maghrebian identity: it is the expression of a culture rich in Berberian, Jewish, Andalusian, Turkish, Italian, Spanish and French elements that appear in music, architecture, cooking, dialects [6].

considered “workers” and little attention was paid to their religious faith. The same idea of integration of these migrants was by the way neglected, given the fact that they were not supposed to settle in Europe.

It is only from the late seventies and the eighties that immigrants begin to settle in Europe. During this time the settlement process for Muslims began: “*the activation of the Islamic belonging as one of the main sources of a strong identity, both on the personal and the collective level, in connection with the need of finding roots in the urban areas.*” (Massari, 2006, p.39) [7]. In the perspective of a permanent settlement, religious buildings were opened. The interaction with public administrations, health and social services and schools also became more and more frequent. In this interaction, the first requests to have the possibility of living according to the Islamic religion rules were made.

The settlement of the immigrant populations has forced the European countries to think and to implement *integration* policies. But, what does integration mean? In the early 1960s, two Italian sociologists, Francesco Alberoni and Roberto Baglioni, defined the concept of integration thus: “*Integration must be a reciprocal exchange of human experiences on the psychological level, it must be a cultural exchange from which a larger and more mature experience may emerge and must represent an insertion of the immigrant in the new social structure as a vital and functional part that makes the whole richer*” (Alberoni and Baglioni: 1965, 26) [8]. The two sociologists differentiated ‘integration’ from ‘cultural assimilation’: in the integration process, a reciprocal exchange takes place at the level of the individuals, while the social structure is enriched by the presence of immigrants.

These ideas focus on the exchange, but this exchange takes place inside an institutional frame defined by the hosting state. Philosophies of integration – and political discourses – reflect a broader framework of national identity politics and are deeply rooted into the national order of things. Integration policies reflect an integration ‘model’ – they have a normative aspect, proposing a type of interaction between two populations to be implemented. Consequently, if integration is more a *norm* than a theoretical notion, can indicators scientifically measure it? Do not indicators also depend on the political model of integration?

Moreover, integration is a lengthy, dynamic process that extends to different spheres of social life and has multiple dimensions: cultural, social and economic. Immigrant groups that are well integrated from the economic point of view can preserve key cultural specificities: it is the case, for example, all over Europe, of diaspora groups, such as the Chinese communities. Other groups can be culturally integrated, because of previous anticipatory socialization (Alberoni, Baglioni, 1965<sup>9</sup>) [8], but can have economic difficulties (it is the case, for example, of the “culturally close” Albanians in Italy or Greece, and, more recently, of the European, Christian

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<sup>9</sup> The most important contribution of the quoted Italian sociologists Alberoni and Baglioni as regards the future developments of sociology of migration was the notion of ‘anticipatory socialisation’, which they used to describe the processes immigrants experience in their trajectories from the areas of origin towards the industrial society. ‘Anticipatory socialisation’ means that, before leaving their country, immigrants obtain information on the societies where they are about to go to and consider these societies as ‘models’ of what should be life today. Consequently, immigrants are ‘prepared’ to the integration processes that take place in the receiving society: they become adapted to the new society because this is the ‘dominant model’, while the one they have been socialised in is considered to change or to disappear. The notion of ‘anticipatory socialisation’ has recently been used to understand processes of integration for some groups of foreign immigrants in Italy, as, for example, the Albanians and the Tunisians. The phenomenon does not necessarily produce the same effects as it did in the 1960s.

Rumanians). For all these reasons, some scholars consider integration as a “nebula concept” [9] <sup>10</sup>.

In fact, whatever definition or model of integration we can choose, integration is a collective process, shared by the whole population, both the natives and the immigrants: it has to do with a general model of living together. When difficulties arise, these come from both sides. A conflict concerning the countries of settlement and the ones of origin of the immigrants affects the integration processes: it was the case for Algerians in France during and after the conflict there; it is the case for the participation of the UK in the war in Iraq. Consequently, given the ambiguity of the concept of integration, the issues raised by the Muslim presence in Europe vary according to the historical periods and the national contexts.

Moreover, most researches on the Muslim communities in Europe do not describe them as a monolithic reality: on the contrary, the Muslim presence is characterized by a great internal pluralism [10] <sup>11</sup>. This is because of different factors: “the various national origins, the various interpretations of Islam, to which they make reference, the different organisations that, referring to these interpretations, tend to structure Islam in Europe.” (Cesari, Pacini, 2005, p. XI) [10] In this variety, groups supporting Islamic fundamentalism (which is also a complex concept) are a tiny minority. In this complex panorama, the level of integration of Muslims in Europe can vary within the same Muslim population, some groups or individuals being integrated and some others no, according to the indicators chosen.

### **Muslims’ mobilizations and integration processes in the UK, France and Italy.**

In this paragraph, we will briefly summarize the main “political” issues that have been raised during the processes of settlement and integration in the two old immigration countries: the UK and France; and in a new immigration country, Italy.

#### *The United Kingdom*

It is precisely in the United Kingdom that a few young boys of the second generation Muslims have shifted towards terrorism, creating suspicion and fear against the all-Muslim population. According to the last census in 2001, Muslims represent around 1.5 million people, around 2.7% of the population, settled in the great urban areas of London, Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford and Leeds. The majority of them come from Pakistan (42.5%) and Bangladesh (16.8%), in less measure from India (8.5%), while the rest has its origins in the Balkans (7.5%), as Bosnians and Albanians, and Africa (6.5%), mainly Somalis and Nigerians (Peach 2005). It is the youngest population among the minority groups, one third being between zero and fifteen years, and only the 10% over sixty years (against the 18% of the total population).

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<sup>10</sup> As an Italian expert has declared during a recent research on indicators of integration: “*The concept of integration is difficult because the models that we had before are all failing. Before that they were considered as good. Each model has, however, some good things. Let’s take the English model. Focusing the autonomy, including the religious one, of the religious groups. Then it has appeared that this must be compatible with common norms; probably this had been neglected. Or the French model, on the contrary the focus is on the common norms. This model underestimates the needs of a certain diversification. Each model has good aspects*” (Interview with Franco Pittau, Caritas, Rome, reported in Campani, 2006, p.36) [11].

<sup>11</sup> [10].

As noticed in the previous paragraph, Muslims arrived in the UK in the fifties and sixties, as part of a *post-colonial* migration, for work purpose. Their goal was not initially settlement; in fact they kept for long time the myth of return and strong links with their countries of origin [4]. In the first phase of migration, identifying themselves as workers, they took part in the trade unions and left-wing politics. For example, the Indian Workers Associations contributed to the fight for the rights of the immigrant workers and politically organised their members in support of the Labour Party.

It is only after the seventies that the Muslim communities, in their process of settlement, started to address to the British authorities, first at local level, then at national level, a certain number of requests in order to raise the possibility of living according to the Islamic religious rules. These requests concerned for example the teaching of Islamic religion in schools, the presence of *halal* food in school and factory restaurants, the enlargement of the crime of blasphemy to the Islamic religion, at the same level as for Christianity. This request became particularly important after the publication of the Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. It was, by the way, the mobilisation about this book that contributed to give visibility to the Muslims in the British society (Werbner 2002). Without entering in the merit of the question, there is no doubt that, from the side of the Muslim communities, this mobilisation appeared first of all as a demand for recognition. For British and European public opinion, it appeared, on the contrary, as a manifestation of intolerance and fundamentalism presenting a challenge to the policies of multiculturalism, chosen by the United Kingdom to deal with immigrants. In fact, since the eighties, a long period of negotiation started between the representatives of the Muslim communities and the national and local authorities of the European countries. A negotiation which is still going on around various topics (Muslim schools, rejection of mixed sex education, sharpie tribunals...etc...).

In the UK, hostility to Muslims did not start on the 11th of September, but it has become worse since. After the introduction of the Terrorism Act in 2001, there has been a growth of 302% of the cases of Stop & Search<sup>12</sup> of Muslims, compared to 230% for blacks and 112% for whites between 2001 and 2003<sup>13</sup>.

The Muslim community in the UK is far from being homogeneous and is rich with numerous associations and movements. The most important is *Muslim Council of Britain (MCB)*, a moderate organisation close to the Labour Party<sup>14</sup>. Other organisations are the *Muslim Association of Britain (MAB)* and the *Muslim Parliament of Great Britain (MPGB)*. Founded in 1997 by Kamal El-Helbawy, European speaker of the "Muslim Brothers", the MAB's goal is "*to promote and spread the principles of a positive interactions between Muslims and all the other elements of the British Society*." MAB wants to bring Muslim values inside the British society, creating a collaboration dialogue. Through local committees MAB promotes campaign on different questions (from the retirement of British troops in Iraq to the protest against the French law against wearing the veil).

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<sup>12</sup> This is carried out to search for drugs, weapons, stolen objects.

<sup>13</sup> Cfr. The Independent 22/11/2004 "*Islamophobia makes British Muslims feel increasingly "isolated" in their own country*"

<sup>14</sup> Following the London attacks, in July 2005, the 19th of July, the Muslim Council of Britain was invited to Downing Street as representative of the Muslim community to create a task force to encourage mediations to oppose the development of fundamentalism in the communities (The Guardian, 19/07/2005 "*Blair plea to Muslim leaders at n° 10 meeting*")

The *Muslim Parliament* presents a political, not a religious platform. Its main campaigns have focused on the rejection of the Antiterrorism Act, seen as result of a discrimination process against Muslims and against *forced marriage*, in collaboration with the Institute of Muslim Women. In fact, many Muslim women's associations have also developed in the UK. In the last paragraph, we will analyse the participation of young Muslims alter-global and *Stop the war* movement.

### France

It is in France that the highest number of Muslims in Europe is settled: estimates, referring to people coming from Islamic countries speak of around five million people, the majority from Maghreb (First Algeria, then Tunisia and Morocco), many of whom have French nationality. In fact, in the French integration model, the nation is a universal entity that includes not only the "ethnic French", but all the people who, living in France, accept the republican principles of society. It is the republican model of integration.

Referring to the children of the immigrants from Maghreb (a third and even a fourth generation is present in France), terms as "young people of foreign origin" or "of North African origin" are often used, while similar expressions are rarely used for young people of Italian, Spanish or Portuguese origin. This shows the suspicion concerning the allegiance to France and to the Republic by the Muslims, because of the references to Islam (while the Republic is secular), but also because of the colonial past (the Algerian war). In fact, the condition of the descendants of the Muslim immigrants is difficult in terms of housing and jobs. Confined in the peripheral areas, they are two or three times more likely to be unemployed than other young French people.

The demand for recognition by the second and third generations of Maghrebian origin has taken various forms, according to the periods. It took the form of a secular movement during the eighties: this was the *beur* movement, whose goals were the universal fight against racism, the participation in political national and local life and the civic rights for those excluded from French society, parked in the ghettos of the peripheral areas<sup>15</sup>. Associations of a religious type started in the nineties, questioning the monopoly of the secular Arab elite [10] in the political arena. They represent a very scattered and differentiated movement, questioning the republican separation between the public sphere and the private one, the only one where religion is legitimized. This movement is fuelled by the national controversy about the veil in school, which, started in the eighties and has continued for over fifteen years, until the approval of a law in 2004, prohibiting the religious signs (first of all the veil) in the public schools. It is however far from being hegemonic in a community, which is extremely inhomogeneous. The riots in the peripheral areas –*banlieues*–, which exploded during the fall of 2005, would be the result of a contrast between the socialization in the French society and the socio-economic exclusion. As O.Roy (2002)[12] has written, the situation in the peripheral areas has more to do with: "*the ethnicization of a space of social exclusion than with the creation of a religious ghetto. The culture of the young **beurs** is an urban Western subculture and not an importation from the Middle East.*" (Roy, 2002, p.62) [12].

<sup>15</sup> The movement was strongly encouraged by a Catholic priest from Lyon. The leader of the anti-racist movement that emerged from the "*Beur marche*"- Touche pas a mon pote (Don't touche my friend)- from Lyon to Paris, was not a Maghrebian. Harlem Désir was a Guadaloupéen. His references were the Black Americano civic rights movement. By the way his name came from Harlem, the New York Black area...



The definition “Muslims” doesn’t correspond, in fact, to a homogeneous cultural community. The French sociologist Farhad Khosrokhavar (1997) [1], in *L’Islam des jeunes*, proposes an ideal-typical classification of the young French declaring themselves Muslims:

- The *Islam of integration* that fills the emptiness provoked by the end of great social utopia and the disillusion with the French republican model. They claim a Muslim-French or French-Muslim identity, as sounds the slogan of the Union of the Young Muslims (Union des Jeunes Musulmans): “French yes, but also Muslims;
- The *Islam of exclusion* concerns those who react to the social exclusion by renouncing participation in French society in the name of transcendent rules and finding shelter in an Islam seen mainly as religion of the *submission* to God;
- The *radical Islamism* is definitely a minority phenomenon, which sees in the opposition to the Western society, the only way towards rescue. This minority typology is however overrepresented by the media.

It must be stressed that since 2003, a *Conseil français du culte musulman* (CFCM) is charged to institutionalise the forms of the religious practices.

### Italy

With the arrival of immigrants, in the eighties, Islam became the second religion in the previously mono-religious country of Italy. Today Muslims (immigrants and Italian converted<sup>16</sup>) are estimated between 700,000 and 1 million people. Most important national groups of Muslims are the Moroccans and Albanians, followed by Tunisians and Senegalese. Maghrebians, mostly from Morocco and Tunisia, represent the central group for Muslim immigration in Italy (around 30% of Muslims in Italy is made up of Moroccans), and are divided into Arabs and Berbers, both Sunni groups. Other Muslim national groups are Senegalese, Egyptians, Bengali, Albanians (16% of the Muslim total), Bosnians, Kurds, and Roma from the Balkans, Ghanaians, Nigerians, Somalis, and Iranians etc. Each national group may display different Islamic beliefs: many Senegalese are part of the Muridiya confraternity [13], a Sufi confraternity; Iranians and some Iraqis are Shiite; Moroccans, Tunisians, Egyptians are Sunni; Bosnians and Albanians express a very secular Islam<sup>17</sup>; among Roma, coming from the Balkans, there is an important Sufi component.

The increase “visibility” process “*in the physical and symbolical space*” (Gritti, 2001, p.29) [2] dates back only twenty years. The first Italian mosque was opened in Catania in 1980: the Libyan government financed its construction. From the nineties onwards, the visibility process increased: “*New mosques are opened; aid and funding arrive from foundations; nearly everywhere, in the public space, signs of the Muslim presence appear.*” (Gritti, 2001, p.29) [2]. Public opinion and the media first ignored this process; then a negative reaction began inside Italian society. In a few years,

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<sup>16</sup> The converted Italians should be approximately 70.000, according to estimations, but it is extremely difficult to verify such number.

<sup>17</sup> National origins are important to understand how Islam is practiced. Albanians, who are considered at the 70% Muslims have experienced a Communist regime, which taught State atheism. Even Albanians who consider themselves Muslims have a secular idea of Islam. Many Kurds are *Alewiti*, who have an open view about the women’s condition and a secular idea of Islam; among Kurds and Berbers the pre-Islamic tradition is not completely forgotten and is sometimes rediscovered as an identity mark. Senegalese do not go to the mosque very often. They practice Islam inside their brotherhoods.

Muslims, the Muslim community and the Muslim religion became the object of violent verbal attacks by some Catholic bishops and of aggression, not only verbal but also physical, by some Italian political parties like the Northern League.

Hostile religious and political forces accuse Muslim immigrants of “structural” inability to integrate, because of some characteristics ascribed to Islam, as misogynous, intolerant and retrograde. Islam is described as eternal and monolithic, mostly oriented towards the past and unchangeable in its essence, whose “natural” properties are fanaticism, traditionalism, irrationalism and obscurantism (Gritti, 2001, p.35)[2].

As in other countries, in Italy too, Muslim immigrants are extremely diversified<sup>18</sup>. Researches show the existence of typologies of Muslims, who live their religion and practice it in different ways, both individually and collectively [14, 15, 16, 17, 3, 2, 18, 19, 20]: spiritual interpretations of Islam, which do not require rituality, rigid respect for the five pillars, combination of religion and tradition, communitarian activities are just some of the multiple forms the “Islams” of Italy express.

Multiple actors represent Muslims in Italy. Organisations, associations, religious or national groups, brotherhoods defend different points of view on religion and politics; they have different references and support outside Italy: official Islam of the countries of origin, brotherhoods, and political movements... Diversity and divisions have not helped Muslims in establishing, with the Italian State, a legal “Agreement”, for guaranteeing the free expression of their religion and assuring the State necessary support to implement the right to religious practice (help in building the mosques, presence of *halal* food in schools, holidays, etc....). Such an agreement is, in fact, both for Muslims and for the Italian State, a complex task: Muslim organisations are not united (some forces are accused of being too radical and even jihadist) and the Italian State is influenced by political forces hostile to a recognized Islamic presence.

Magdi Allam (2001) [18] talks of 214 Islamic religious places in Italy, distinguishing between Mosques<sup>19</sup>; Islamic cultural centres, which have structures and an organization able to offer, apart from cultural activity, cultural information, social assistance and institutional mediation (around 30); Islamic centres which have cultural activities, Koran teaching courses and religious practices (around 80); and finally, just religion places.

Each mosque or centre has a different religious – and also political - orientation. The fact that each mosque has a specific orientation depends on the Islamic confessions: Sunni, Shia, and Sufi. The different beliefs, already, represent a wide range of religious ways of life in the general framework called Islam. Another difference depends on the political orientation, in the sense of the attitude to political Islam. Some mosques have a more indirect, moderate political position; others are considered close to fundamentalism.

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<sup>18</sup> According to Gritti (2001 [2]), in Italy it would be more pertinent to speak about “Islams”, using the plural, and not of “one” Unitarian Islam.

<sup>19</sup> The most well known mosque in Italy is the one of Monte Antenne in Rome, officially open on June 1995, thanks to the support of the city of Rome, which gave a piece of land, and to the financial support of Saudi Arabia. This mosque is the biggest in Europe, able to welcome 2000 people. The project of the Mosque of Rome date back to 1974, but it took over 20 years to be finished. The costs for the building of the Mosque have been paid by Saudi Arabia through the League of the Islamic World, a Saudi organisation which has three goals: assuring the support of Islam at the international level, mainly where Muslims represent a minority, to promote Islamic mission with the non Muslim and to control the type of Islam which is practiced.

Andrea Pacini (2000) makes a precise analysis of the typologies of Islam which is expressed in the different forms of organisations and initiatives existing in Italy: initiatives which are more or less directed by Muslim states or that refer somehow to the official Islam of the states, religious brotherhoods and movements which unite strictly the religious dimension to the political dimensions. Pacini admits that at local level, in local initiatives, it is common to find combinations, supra-positions, synergies between one level and the other, one organisation and the other. Pacini's analysis shows the different conflicts existing between the initiatives supported by the States and the political Islam, which the States try to counter-act, but also between the States (for example between the Saudi royal dynasty and the Moroccan dynasty for the control of the Mosque of Rome)<sup>20</sup>.

It should not be forgotten however; that the majority of the Muslims in Italy do not go regularly to the mosque or to Islamic cultural centres and have a quite secular attitude to religion. Practising can be a matter of personal engagement (praying five times a day, eating *halal* food, respecting Ramadan...) more than going regularly to the mosques or the Islamic cultural centres. This is what appears from different researches, which have been done in Italy, which show the predominance of personal interpretations of Islam, identified with spiritual values.

### Security, immigrants and "moral panic"

We have seen that in various European countries, the growing visibility of Muslims and their demand for recognition of religious practices have become political matters and have raised hostility long before the 11<sup>th</sup> of September. Muslims are a component of immigration, which is also object of negative reactions: *"Extra-European immigrants who come to Europe to look for asylum and work are seen as threatening aliens... (...) There is a growing trend in Europe, to give responsibility of all the socio-economic problems –unemployment, lack of housing, criminality, welfare- to the immigrants, who are deprived of "our moral and cultural values", simply for the fact that they are among us."* (Stolcke, 2000, p. 158-159) [21].

The hostility towards immigrants is largely a "constructed phenomenon" –not dependant on the objective "threat" represented by immigrants- that, according to some scholars, is a product of the post-modern condition and the change in the perception of security and risk. In his book, *The loneliness of the global citizen* (2000)[5], Zigmunt Bauman analyzes the concept of security, considering three dimensions: *security, certainty, safety*, which are the conditions of self-security and self-confidence. The lack of one of these components provokes a sense of insecurity; or, it is upon the conditions of *self-security* and of *self-confidence* that the capacity of acting and thinking in a rational way depends. (Baumann, 2000, p 25)[5]. The lack of one of these components provokes a sense of insecurity, nourishing *"the anxiety, the search for a scapegoat and the aggression."* (Ibidem, p.25). The lack of *existential security* is a

<sup>20</sup> Pacini gives an interesting example of the differences of affiliation among mosques in Italy. In Turin, Pacini says, near two mosques ruled by imam close to the Muslim brothers, there is a mosque (or better a prayer room) ruled by a Moroccan imam of wahabi tendency (close to the Islam represented by Saudi Arabia and the Saudian family), and one, recently opened, for Afghans and Pakistanis close to the Islamic movement of Jama'at al-islami.

*consequence of the development of economic liberalism that produces the perception of a precarious existence*; the lack of *certainty* depends from the difficulty in understanding the reality, of foreseeing the events and putting them in an ordered understandable process. Finally *safety* has to do with the personal and individual dimension of security that concerns the body and its extension, as the family members and the personal goods and properties. These three images of security overlap necessarily.

Individuals, alone or collectively, are not able to oppose to deep causes of precariousness, uncertainty and insecurity that arise every day, in a time of globalization. Bauman considers as causes of insecurity, the new world disorder, characterized by the end of clear divisions, natural borders, of clear interests and political strategies; universal deregulation, because of the irrationality and the moral blindness of the market competition; freedom without limits guaranteed to capital and finance, but denied to persons; the weakness of social networks of trust, (...), the image of a fragmented reality...

Western societies are going through a phase of transition where trajectories of social mobility and redefined, traditional representative systems are in crisis, individual and collective identities are questioned. Given that the governments cannot promise their citizens "a secure existence and a certain future", they can be harsh against threats that are close and visible as immigrants at the borders or in the cities: collective uncertainties are reduced to private worries that can find a political answer in the policies of *law and order*. Immigrants are the easy scapegoat of these policies.

Another interesting theory clarifies the mechanisms of construction of immigrants as scapegoats: the moral panics. S. Cohen theorized the concept of "moral panic" in his famous book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics. The Creation of the Mods and the Rockers* (1972)[22]. He analyzed how an event of young people looting generated a strong social reaction, because of a campaign set up by the media, and of the harsher action by police. Cohen used the term "moral panic" to indicate the overwhelming reaction of the media, the public, the social control agencies to a case of youth criminality. For moral panic, the author defines: "*A condition, an event, when a person or a group of persons begin to be defined as a threat to some values or interests of the society: its nature is presented in a simplified way and stereotyped by the media; moral barricades are erected by editors, politicians religious people and other thinkers/intellectuals; recognized experts pronounce their diagnosis and suggest possible solutions. (...) Sometimes the subject that has provoked the panic is relatively new; in other cases it existed before, but it becomes central. Sometimes the panic is forgotten and just something is left in the collective memory; in other cases, it can last longer and produce changes even in the ways how a society perceive itself.*" (1972, p. 9)[22]. Finally, the reaction of a society to some events depends upon the perception of these facts as a threat to some "*positions, status, interests, ideologies and values*" (Cohen, 1972, p. 191)[22].

The interesting aspect in a situation of moral panic is that we face a reality that is partly objective, but partly socially constructed (through the media, public opinion, the organizations of social control, political institutions). Islamic fundamentalism is certainly a political threat: however, the common sense that today presents Islamic fundamentalism as a "natural character" of the Arabic culture or, worse, of the Arab people, ignores the political strategies used to mobilize by different political agents, the political discourses, the historical memories, the great variety of the contexts, the shifting identifications of the individuals. There are no serious studies, at the moment,

showing that Muslims in Europe are at special risk for being recruited by fundamentalist terrorist cells. In any case, as for other terrorisms, it can be defeated by political means and not through the stigmatization of a people. What researches show is that there are problems of drop out from schools and of deviant behaviours among second generation immigrants all over Europe. As far as crimes are concerned it should be looked carefully at some specific areas and at some specific crimes –mainly connected with drug addiction, drug selling, trafficking, prostitution, rape... The equation Muslims-terrorists is a discourse tending to create moral panic used by some politicians for their political purposes.

### **Young Muslims in the Uk and in Italy: political participation and identity**

In this last section, we give voice to some young people belonging to the second generation of Muslims in the UK and in Italy interviewed during two research studies done in the last four years. From the interviews it appears that the fact of being Muslim is an identity which it is impossible to get rid of, because –independently from the personal auto-identification- it depends much from the “look” of the other. Even young Muslims who are not openly engaged in activities –either in secular associations or in mosques- are touched by the general climate of suspicion that sometimes concerns even close persons, as the friends.

In the UK, the research –done by the University of Rome, Antimo Farro and Emmanuele Toscano in collaboration with the University of Florence- had as object the immigrants’ participation to the alter-global movement and has especially focused upon the *Stop the War* movement and the *London Social Forum of October 2004*. The coalition *Stop the War* was founded the 21 September 2001 during a public meeting to which more than 2000 people took part at the Friends Meeting House in London<sup>21</sup>, after the attacks on the twin towers in New York and the reaction of the Bush administration that declared “war on terror”. It is, in fact, to this war that the name of the coalition refers. The organisations that have become members of the coalition is: *Socialist Workers Party (SWP)*, *Respect! Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)*, plus some Muslim organisations as the already mentioned *Muslim Association of Britain (MAB)* and the *Muslim Parliament of Great Britain (MPGB)*. Other organisations as the *Muslim Council of Britain (MCB)* at the beginning took part in *STOP the War* constitution, but then they preferred the external support because of an orientation considered too extremist (they are close to the Trotskyism) and the critics to the Labour Party, to which the MCB is close.

The results of the research tend to show that young Muslims –especially young women- take part into these movements in the attempt of being at the same time Muslims and British, as a reaction to the hostility they have been victims of after the 11th of September and an answer to the risk of auto-isolation of the community. After the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, the discrimination became very strong, and the reaction of the young people is to participate more, to become more visible, instead of hiding themselves. This is for example the opinion of two young women interviewed, activists of *STOP the War*:

*“We have become aware that we are darker, different. Our parents were immigrants who had come here to work. We, the second generation, born, grown and*

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<sup>21</sup> Cfr. [http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/article.php4?article\\_id=1520](http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/article.php4?article_id=1520)

*educated in the UK, have never perceived ourselves as immigrants, but as British. Or, after the 11th of September, press has started to come here, in Birmingham, asking the Muslim population. Are you British? Are you Muslim? I consider it very offensive*" (interview with a young woman, activist of the coalition *Stop the war*, London)

*"My father, my brothers and all the men of the community were more calm than the women after the political crisis provoked by the 11<sup>th</sup> of September and the war in Afghanistan. They didn't want to raise the voice in front of the aggressions, because they thought they would have been more attacked if they criticized the government, but I wanted to do something."* (Interview with a young woman, speaker of *Stop the War of Birmingham*).

Taking part in the movement breaks the isolation and creates new solidarities. The initiatives against the war can in fact be part of a general movement that see Muslims and non-Muslims fighting against "neo-imperialism", the predominance of the U.S.s.... Young Muslims feel that they can radically criticize the politics of the government of Tony Blair to follow Bush in the war in Iraq, without being isolated from the British society. On the contrary, they fight against the war together with the progressive British: *"Muslims don't consider this war as a war to Islam: they are aware of its neo-imperialist character and they are aware that their force comes from the alliance with other people."* Says another young activist (boy) interviewed.

Among these "other people", there is certainly the association *Respect*, part of *Stop the war* coalition, founded by an ex-Labour party member and active in the social forum. *Respect* is a political party founded in 2004 by the former Labour Member of Parliament George Galloway, expelled by the Labour Party for his positions against Blair's choice to go to war against Iraq. An alternative to the Labour Party, the coalition *Respect* has organized its electoral campaign in 2005 on the question of peace and in defence of the Muslim community, victims of racist and islamophobic aspects. *Respect* has a great support among the Muslim communities. As young Muslim woman interviewed declares: *"I am proud of what Respect is doing for the Muslim community."*

*Respect* considers that cultural and religious differences have to be highly respected and has brought this idea inside *Stop the war*. An example of this is given by the day of mobilization against the war of the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2002, period of Ramadan. In that occasion everybody had the possibility to pray, thanks to a moving char where an imam was praying and a big tribune for the imam in Trafalgar Square. Another Muslim activist young woman remembers this event:

*"A great participation of Muslims was foreseen: In order to be sure that this presence would be compatible with the religious rule. For this a great tribune was set up in Trafalgar Square, so that at the moment of praying an imam would have gone there. (...) A Muslim prayer in the centre of London! Someby was unhappy, but if I think that, if we really want terrorism to be isolated, the only way is to make Muslims feel part of this movement. It is what happened. They have succeeded in integrating Muslims and their needs inside the demonstrations. This has been symbolic, important and very nice!"*<sup>22</sup>.

The presence of women is one of the most interesting aspects of the movement, but it is in general the younger generation who want to express itself without being considered "traitors" to the receiving country. The movement against the war has represented for British Muslims the occasion for asserting themselves in the double

<sup>22</sup> Cfr. [www.mabonline.info/english/modules.php?name=About](http://www.mabonline.info/english/modules.php?name=About), "The MAB, when and why?",

subjective dimensions of British citizens and Muslims, and, at the same time, opposing themselves to Islamophobic aggression, insisting on their condemnation both of terrorism and of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. They found consequently the way to escape the isolation where the extreme right forces wanted to force them. From their opposition to terrorism and war, they enlarge progressively their discourse of opposition, joining other new global topics. Says another activist –a boy: “*The United States impose their choices on everybody on the planet. We are against this domination...there is a space for alternative in terms of trade, equal trade, market, in cultural terms, in every sector...I see in the Muslim participation in the movement the concrete possibility to contrast the United States, proposing an alternative, with other forces who want the same...We are the only ones who can be an obstacle to the American domination.*”

Young Muslims in the UK and in Italy have much in common: their frustration with the assimilation Muslim-Terrorist and their double identity. As a young boy says: “*My friends sometimes “forget” that I am of Arabic origin and some heavy words escape...or they ask me what do I think about terrorists as if they did not know me or they didn’t know the answer...it is as if they wouldn’t talk with me but with a foreigner, a “Muslim”...*” (Selim, 18 years, Egypt)

“*I am very sensitive from this point of view: one day a friend...I do not even know why we have ended up to talk about this...but he started to say that Muslims are all terrorists...I have asked him to notice that this is impossible, that in the world there are other types of terrorism, as in Spain...but he, nothing, he continued in his idea...and when, at the end, he had fallen in contradiction, has concluded:*” *With all that the television shows...*” (Jassira, 20-Syria-Tunisia)

This stereotyped image that is imposed on the young people –a real stigma- is in complete contradiction with the awareness young people have about the differences of the conception and the practices of the Islam according to education and social class. They are perfectly aware that there is not just one Muslim identity.

“*Look, culture and education have a great influence on religion. Look...the type of education my parents have received, in comparison to what I have received in the Italian schools- this influences the mentality. For example, let’s look at the role of the woman...for my mother, who went very little to school, a Muslim woman who wears the hijab should not be too much in public, going out, doing sport...for me it is just the opposite, in a society that perceives Muslim women negatively, these have to take all the rights, to go, to work...to show that we are like the others...*” (Karima, 24, Morocco) The same Karima insists that men who make heavy comments on women who do not wear the veil are the ones who are not cultivated and come from rural areas.

The interviews show that these young people develop “*identity tactics and strategies in order to take some distance from the role that the surrounding milieu tends to force on them.*” (Frisina, 2005). They tend to present themselves with a double –or even triple- identity, and it is only when the Islam is seen in negative terms, as a threat, that they react insisting on their Arab-Muslim identity: “*Problems change, we grow up, even our identity changes. Already now, I feel myself more Italian than Moroccan...maybe in ten years I will feel completely Italian...or I will look at the European citizenship.*” (Karima, 24 Morocco)

“*When they ask me who I am, where am I from, I say I am in-between...Italian and Egyptian...but if I am provoked...then I say I am Egyptian and Muslim...*” (Fahima, 17, Egypt)

According to the sociologists Annalisa Frisina: *"Islam is perceived by these young people as one of the references, but certainly not the only one. In comparison with their parents, it is not only question of "right to difference" (mosques, cemeteries, etc...), but right to equality, even remaining Muslims. The question of the citizenship is crucial..."* (Frisina, 2005, p.156)

## Conclusion

The conclusion of the paper is that, if peaceful societies, having a high level of social cohesion combined with the recognition of cultural pluralism, are a goal for liberal thinkers, the main obstacles to implement them do not lie in cultural differences, but in political conflicts. General conflicts taking place at world level may influence the behaviour of the immigrants. Eventually, this has always been the case: for example, during World War 2 for Italians and Germans in the USA and in Canada, during the Algerian war for Algerian immigrants in France, and so on... Migration often represents a conflicting double system of "allegiance" (the sending and receiving country) migrants have to cope with. This complex process should however be recognized and analyzed in socio-political terms and through socio-political categories, avoiding any stigmatization of cultures, religions<sup>23</sup> and /or "civilizations"<sup>24</sup>. Discrimination of immigrants in social life and labour market represents of course a main source of "social stress", which can encourage deviant behaviour and radicalization. However, deviant behaviour can take extremely various forms –for example organized crime<sup>25</sup> or, more often, petty criminality-; it does not necessarily

<sup>23</sup> I am personally extremely critical of theories referring to clash of civilizations, because, in my opinion, they are based on an ambiguous overlapping between cultures, religions and civilizations. Religions have much larger spheres of influences than just one culture: they are often developed in one culture, but they tend to go beyond the borders of their own culture and to expand, adapting themselves to the new cultures. As the Italian sociologist of religions, Enzo Pace, writes, a religion represents much more than a culture [23]. As for the concept of "civilization", numerous researches show that it is a historically constructed concept (see for example [24]). Consequently I tend to share the critical point of Hardt and Negri, who speak of *"bizarre historical identities called civilizations"* [25]. Moreover, borders of civilizations shift and are defined according to the historical contexts. What are the borders of the Western "civilization" and the ones of the so-called "Muslim world"? Where do we put Albania and Bosnia, Muslim countries of Europe? According to Hardt and Negri (2004), the pretended "clash of civilizations" are in fact global conflicts between nation states and blocs that are not any more justified in ideological terms but rather in cultural-religious terms: "Islam-West". The Islamic fundamentalist trans-national movement is certainly an important phenomenon of our time. It is not however the only religious or ethnic fundamentalist movement existing in the world, even if the actions perpetrated have been particularly spectacular and murderous, from the 11<sup>th</sup> of September in New York to the 11<sup>th</sup> of March in Madrid.

<sup>24</sup> I was writing this article, when the news of a fundamentalist cell ready to bring attacks to American targets in Germany was made public, composed by two Germans converted to Islam and a Turkish German resident. In relationship to this fact, the Herald Tribune has written: *"The German plot is another remainder that hatred comes in all nationalities. The two suspects are German who converted to Islam and, acting out of a pronounced hatred to the United States, went off to Pakistan for training. (...) To some officials, all this demonstrated the recruitment prowess of Al-Qaeda. But it is more likely that the two Germans and their Turkish accomplice. Were seized first by a pathological hatred of the United States, and then sought out the rhetoric of Islamist extremism, just as their predecessors in the Baader-Meinhof gang had affected the trappings of radical Marxism."* (Herald Tribune, Tuesday, September 11th, 2007, p. 8). I fully agree with this analysis, reminding as well that terrorism is certainly not a practice specific to Islamic fundamentalism...

<sup>25</sup> The development of criminal organizations as the *"mano nera"* or the *"mafia –cosa nostra"* by the Italians in the USA at the end of the XIXth century can be read partly as a reaction to the discrimination of which new immigrants were victims (of course many other factors should be also considered). On the contrary, the



lead to terrorism. This is the same for radicalization that can be maintained at the political debate level, without shifting towards terrorist acts. Cultural stigmatization is, however, part of the social stress imposed on immigrants, as even the small research I present on second generation Muslims in Italy shows.

As we have seen, the mobilisation of the Muslim communities in Europe has much to do with the social and political participation for the recognition of a specific identity that coincides with religion (and with religious practices) and for being accepted both as Europeans and Muslims. Opposed to “assimilation”, Muslims seek nevertheless to be integrated into European societies. Questions raised by Muslim minorities challenge multiculturalism, minorities’ rights and also secularization in nation states where religion is separated by political power and is a private affair. However, the issue of secularization doesn’t concern only the Islamic religion<sup>26</sup>.

The hostility of which Muslims are victims is not, by the way, necessarily producing a will to separate and shift towards Islamic fundamentalist ideology: on the contrary, it can encourage participation in movements where they can express their opposition to USA and British policy together with European militants.

As a UK Muslim activist of the Stop the war movement says: *“This country is their home, The effort of islamic institutions should go even more in a direction of moderation in order to show young people that a right apprenticeship of their own religion is not contradictory with the concept of belonging and citizenship of the non-muslim society, where they have chosen to build thier lives.”*<sup>27</sup>.

Intercultural and inter-religious dialogues, as well as free and rich political debates, are the best answer to prevent the shifting of immigrant Muslim communities in Europe towards radical fundamentalist positions justifying or even in favour of terrorism.

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terrorist actions of the Italian anarchists –for example Cafiero in France- responded to an ideology that saw in the anarchy a way to reach a better world.

<sup>26</sup> For example, in Europe, Catholics and in the USA Protestants tend as well to challenge secular states on abortion and gay marriages. It is clear that the perception of blasphemy is certainly different: even if the Catholic authorities were quite mad about the book, “Da Vinci Code”, they didn’t burn the books in a square as some religious authorities did in some Islamic states...

<sup>27</sup> Cfr. [www.mabonline.info/english/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=545](http://www.mabonline.info/english/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=545)

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